

Independent Listening Task: Stereotypes

At a glance

Level: ISE III

Focus: Independent listening task

Aims: To develop listening strategies when listening to a lecture on the use of stereotypes in education

Objectives: To listen and report a line of argument, to summarise a lecture and to infer the speaker's opinion

Topic: Stereotypes

Language functions: Evaluating options, summarising, deducing and inferring

Lexis: Stereotypes

Materials needed: Whiteboard, transcript or audio recording and equipment, one student worksheet per student, pens, and dictionaries

Timing: Approximately 90 minutes

Procedure

Preparation

1. Print one student worksheet per student.
2. Pre-record the audio. If no equipment is available to record and/or play the audio, print out the audio script and read it to the class at a normal pace.

In class

1. Explain to the class that they will be doing a listening activity today in class and that this will help them to prepare for the Independent listening task of the ISE III Speaking & Listening exam.
2. Write the word *stereotype* on the board and elicit its meaning with examples. Possible examples:

Germans are punctual; men can't multi-task.

3. Ask the students, in pairs, to brainstorm as many stereotypes as possible about their own culture. Then ask them to discuss to what extent the stereotype is true. Carry out feedback as a class.

4. Write the following statement on the whiteboard:

Stereotypes can be used in the classroom to learn about other cultures. Ask students if they agree or disagree.

Elicit phrases that are used to agree or disagree and write them on the board. Examples:

In my opinion...; The way I see it...; If you want my honest opinion...; As far as I'm concerned...; If you ask me...; You have a point there; I'm afraid I disagree; I beg to differ;

5. Give each student a copy of the student worksheet and tell them to carry out Task A. Ask the students to write next to each stereotype whether they agree or disagree with it. Tell them to work alone first and then discuss their answers in pairs. Carry out feedback as a group.

6. Put the following words and phrases on the board:

distort reality, resort to, shared perceptions, pick apart, attribution, positive connotation, stir up

Tell the students that these words are in the lecture on stereotypes that they are going to listen to. Tell the students to discuss the meaning of these words with a partner. If possible, ask them to use a dictionary. Once the students have finished, feedback in open-class.

7. Practise the pronunciation of the words and phrases by letting the class repeat after you. Drill the words chorally and individually.

8. Tell the students they are going to listen to the first part of a lecture on the possible role of stereotypes in education. Ask the students to carry out Task B on their worksheet whilst they are listening. Tell them to write two arguments for and two arguments against the use of stereotypes in education. Clearly announce when you are about to play the audio. If you were unable to pre-record the audio, read out loud the audio script at a normal pace and with appropriate pausing.

9. Ask the students to compare their answers in pairs. Do group feedback and go over the answers as a class.

Answer key for Task B:

Arguments for: rich source for intercultural learning, stereotypes can be picked apart

Arguments against: may elicit uncritical comments, may offend people.

10. Tell the students that they are going to listen to the second part of the lecture and this time they need to carry out Task C. Ask the students to write down five exercises based on stereotypes that can be done in the classroom. After you have played the audio, ask students to compare answers in pairs. Carry out feedback as a group.

Answer key for Task C:

- 1. Replace nationalities with other ones, including their own*
- 2. Change the attributions*
- 3. Rephrase negative opinions using words with a positive connotation*
- 4. Give examples contradicting the stereotype*
- 5. Put the stereotype in its historical or social context*

11. Tell the students they are going to listen to both Part 1 and 2 together. Ask them to summarise the talk in 1 or 2 sentences. Once the audio has finished, give the students one minute to finish the summary. Ask the students to compare their summaries with a partner. Carry out feedback as a group and elicit what the speaker's opinion is.
12. Ask students to talk to their partner and discuss whether they agree with the speaker or not. Carry out feedback as a group.
13. Give the students some key information about the Independent listening task of the Speaking & Listening exam. Tell them that they will listen to the recording twice and that whilst they listen, they are encouraged to make notes. They can prepare for the Independent listening task by listening to lectures online. Tell them that the first time they listen they should listen for gist or general understanding and the second time they should listen for detail.

Extension activity

1. Write the following question on the board and ask students to discuss it in pairs.

What role does the media – including the internet - play in maintaining or challenging stereotypes?

Carry out feedback as a group.

2. Tell students they are now going to do one of the activities suggested by the speaker. Ask students, in pairs, to write down as many stereotypes about nationalities as they know. Once they have finished, ask them to replace the nationalities with other ones. Then tell the students to replace negative stereotypes with an attribution that has a more positive connotation. Carry out feedback as a group and elicit their opinion on the exercise.

Further support activity

1. If possible, play the audio twice for each part.
2. Give students the audio script so they can follow it whilst they are listening or immediately after listening so they have an aid to find the answers.

After class

Ask the students to find stereotypes about their own culture on the Internet or in a book that surprises them. Ask them to report back in the next class.

Audio Script

Independent Listening Task:
Stereotypes & Education

Part 1

Is it possible to use stereotypes in the classroom? I think we can all agree that they would have to be handled with care as their use could elicit uncritical comments that may even be borderline racist. On the other hand, stereotypes have the potential to be a rich source of materials for intercultural learning, but like many such materials, they have to be handled with care.

In the beginning of my career, I was of the opinion that the goal of education was to abolish stereotypes. That, let's be honest, is not a realistic goal. Sure, stereotypes consistently distort reality, but as has often been pointed out, stereotypes make our complex reality more manageable. We also share stereotypes. This is evident when students share aspects of their own culture; they often resort to stereotypical images. Would it be possible that stereotypes could be a starting point to learn about other cultures? Perhaps students first need to be made aware of the shared perceptions before stereotypes can be picked apart.

The difficulty is that stereotypes are often a manifestation of prejudice or social inequality and this makes their use in the classroom challenging. Teachers have to be aware to not offend anyone and to not encourage mockery of others.

Part 2

Easier said than done, I hear you think. As every teacher knows, it can sometimes be hard to know how students are going to respond to something. I would like to suggest strategies to deal with this. One way to deal with stereotypes is asking students to replace nationalities with other nationalities, including their own. They could also change the attributions. This way they start to understand how stereotypes may work as often they say more about their own culture than about the culture mentioned in the stereotype. If you for example say, all X are lazy are you not really saying that you consider your own nationality as hard-working?

Now I would like to talk about some things to keep in mind if you want to maximize the potential of using stereotypes in intercultural education. Firstly, if the stereotype shows a negative opinion about the nationality encourage rephrasing using words with a more positive connotation. Secondly, encourage students to give examples contradicting the stereotype. And finally, consider approaching the dismantlement of the stereotype by putting it into its historical or social context.

Stereotypes tend to stir up different reactions. Some may find them offensive; others may find them amusing and would not be willing to abandon them. If they have a place in education both views need to be balanced out to each other.

Student Worksheet

Independent Listening Task:
Stereotypes

Task A

Read the six statements related to stereotypes. Do you agree or disagree with them? Discuss your answers with a partner.

Statement	Agree or disagree?
Stereotypes can be used in the classroom to learn about other cultures.	
The goal of education is to abolish stereotypes.	
Stereotypes help us to manage our complex reality.	
Stereotypes often find their root in history.	
Stereotypes can be offensive, but also amusing.	
Stereotypes often say more about someone's own culture than about the culture mentioned in the stereotype.	

Task B

Listen to the first part of the audio and write two arguments for and two against the use of stereotypes in education.

Arguments for?	Arguments against?
1.	1.
2.	2.

Task C

Listen to the second part of the audio. What exercises does the speaker suggest can be done in the classroom?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Answer Key:

B. Arguments for:

rich source for intercultural learning, stereotypes can be picked apart

Arguments against:

may elicit uncritical comments, may offend people

- C. 1. Replace nationalities with other ones, including their own
2. Change the attributions
3. Rephrase negative opinions using words with a positive connotation
4. Give examples contradicting the stereotype
5. Put the stereotype in its historical or social context.

Original source:

<http://johnbcorbett.wordpress.com/2013/08/15/stereotypes/>